PEMBENTUKAN PASANGAN DAN KELOMPOK UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN BAHASA INGGRIS SISWA KELAS VI SEKOLAH DASAR 060878

FORMATION OF PAIRS AND GROUP TO IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF GRADE VI STUDENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 060878

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of group learning methods in improving the English skills of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 060878. Using a qualitative approach involving direct interviews, questionnaires, and documentation, this study identified three main problems that hinder the success of group learning: gender differences affecting group formation, difficulty ensuring the active participation of each member, and relatively long time for group management. The results of the study indicate that these problems cause group learning to be less effective and have an impact on the decline in students' English skills. Therefore, strategies such as forming inclusive groups, clear division of tasks, the use of participatory observation instruments, the utilization of technology, and the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning approach are recommended to improve the effectiveness of group learning and students' English skills. This study provides an important contribution to developing English teaching methods at the elementary school level by considering social aspects and more effective classroom management.

Keywords : *Pair Work, Group Learning, Gender Differences, Group Interaction, Elementary School English.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas metode pembelajaran berkelompok dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris siswa kelas enam di SD Negeri 060878. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang melibatkan wawancara langsung, kuesioner, dan dokumentasi, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tiga masalah utama yang menghambat keberhasilan pembelajaran berkelompok: perbedaan gender yang memengaruhi pembentukan kelompok, kesulitan memastikan partisipasi aktif setiap anggota, dan waktu yang relatif lama untuk pengelolaan kelompok. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masalah-masalah ini menyebabkan pembelajaran berkelompok menjadi kurang efektif dan berdampak pada penurunan kemampuan bahasa Inggris siswa. Oleh karena itu, strategi seperti pembentukan kelompok inklusif, pembagian tugas yang jelas, penggunaan alat observasi partisipatif, pemanfaatan teknologi, dan penerapan pendekatan Problem-Based Learning direkomendasikan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pembelajaran berkelompok dan keterampilan bahasa Inggris siswa. Penelitian ini

memberikan kontribusi penting dalam pengembangan metode pengajaran bahasa Inggris di tingkat sekolah dasar dengan mempertimbangkan aspek sosial dan manajemen kelas yang lebih efektif.

Kata Kunci : Kerja Berpasangan, Pembelajaran Kelompok, Perbedaan Gender, Interaksi Kelompok, Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Dasar.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, English is an important international language and considered a key competency that must be mastered (Arizona & Sari, 2021). Early childhood is the right time to teach English to students. At this age, the use of appropriate and effective learning strategies will result in efficient learning processes, enabling students to become more fluent in English. According to Islamiyah (2021), English language learning is more easily accepted by students when they are still young, compared to when they are adults. Research conducted by Makarim (2021) revealed that almost all parents hope their children will be able to master English. This expectation provides both motivation and an opportunity for students to learn English from an early age.

Students' communicative abilities in English are one of the long-term goals that language teachers hope to achieve. English, as an international language, serves a crucial function in life, especially for inter-country communication. English not only acts as a global communication tool but also as a medium to transfer and develop knowledge and technology (Artha & Yasmin, 2022).

English is a compulsory subject in schools, consisting of four skills divided into two categories: receptive and productive (Bumbálková, 2021). These four skills include listening and reading (receptive), as well as writing and speaking (productive). Most Indonesians use English as a spoken language to communicate with people from various countries. Speaking skills, as a productive skill, have become increasingly important in the 21st century, especially in education, as they are essential to improving students' communication abilities (Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Rao, 2019).

Firdausah (2020) states that one strategy to facilitate language teaching is pairwork. Working in pairs can make language learning processes more efficient, easier to implement, and easier to understand. However, researchers have found that low English language competence among students is a crucial issue that requires attention. Based on questionnaires and interviews with English teachers at SD Negeri 060878 , we found that group learning was less effective. This was primarily due to gender differences, where some female students did not want to be paired or grouped with male students, and vice versa. In addition, teachers struggled to ensure that all group members participated, and organizing students into groups or pairs often consumed much of the class time.

Although group work is often defined as "students working together as a group or team" (Blatchford et al., 2003, p. 155), it is important to recognize that group work is not a single activity but encompasses various activities under different conditions. This indicates that group work characteristics can change multiple times during a session or across a group's existence, implying that certain working modes may suit various group tasks, and vice versa.

It is also essential to identify how work is completed within a group: whether students are working in groups or as a group. From the perspective of group work, two main ways to negotiate collaboration exist: working in groups (collaboration) or working as a group. When students sit together in groups but work individually on isolated parts of a group task, it is termed working in groups. This situation is common in educational settings, as stated by Gillies and Boyle (2011).

The learning process occurs when students gain new experiences and learn about one another. As described above, group and pair work should be presented with broader understanding and greater tolerance among partners and group members. However, the process does not always run smoothly if the group demonstrates tendencies of a "cold war" or intimidation. As happened at SD Negeri 060878 english teaching at SD Negeri 060878 Krakatau faces several challenges: firstly, gender differences, as some students refuse to be grouped or paired with the opposite sex; secondly, teachers find it difficult to ensure each student participates actively when using group or pair methods; and thirdly, the lengthy process, as time limitations in teaching at SD Negeri 060878 pose a serious challenge for teachers. In line with these challenges, Murphy and Dornyei (2004, p. 20) state that teachers, as group leaders and knowledge sources, play an important role in group work. In particular, teachers create relationships within groups as facilitators, maintaining closeness, contact, and interaction.

According to Linse, Nunan, and David (2005), storytelling has a significant impact on English language learning at various ages. Storytelling promotes good communication in the classroom. With interesting stories, students can easily grasp the content and acquire a wealth of knowledge from an early age. Storytelling also benefits listeners by enhancing their listening skills. Furthermore, Sari (2021) states that storytelling greatly facilitates students' fluency in English. The development of children's language skills and their overall development are interrelated, even though each develops differently. Therefore, to achieve optimal results through dialogue-based learning strategies, teachers must have effective time management, from preparation and implementation to closure.

Motivation also plays an important role in boosting students' enthusiasm. Consistent with Rasyad and Sari (2020), teacher motivation has a significant influence on the English learning process. Maintaining student motivation and interest are two main factors supporting academic success. When students are motivated and interested in the material, they are more likely to make connections between topics, collaborate on material, and remember information better.

Based on these various perspectives, it can be concluded that pair and group learning methods can be very effective and have a positive impact on English learning in elementary schools. However, teachers need careful time management from preparation to implementation and closing, as well as continuous guidance throughout the learning process to ensure teaching and learning activities run smoothly.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques consisting of direct interviews and questionnaire distribution (Amelia et al., 2023). The researcher aims to obtain in-depth and detailed data regarding the implementation of the group learning method in English language learning in grade 6 at SD Negeri 060878 (Nugraha, 2025). Interviews were conducted face-to-face with the English teacher, Mrs. Lusi Febria, S.Pd. Through these interviews, the researcher successfully explored information related to the teacher's experiences, views, and perceptions regarding the application of the group learning model. The interviews also provided the opportunity for the researcher to ask follow-up questions and clarify responses to ensure the data obtained is more valid and complete.

In addition, the researcher distributed a questionnaire containing statements related to the implementation of group learning to the teacher. This questionnaire serves to complement the

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interview data with more structured information about the implementation, benefits, and challenges of applying group learning in grade 6 at SD 060878. During the research process, the researcher also conducted documentation together with the English teacher as an effort to support the validity and richness of the data. This documentation includes field notes, photos, or recordings of learning activities relevant to the research focus. With this combination of interviews, questionnaires, and documentation methods, the researcher hopes to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the effectiveness of the application of group learning in improving the quality of English language learning in grade 6 at SD Negeri 060878.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Many schools have implemented foreign languages as the medium of communication in all aspects of learning, and the most frequently used foreign language is English. Therefore, English language learning is highly emphasized. Teaching English, especially at the elementary school level, involves the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These language skills must be balanced with a rich vocabulary for students, as vocabulary is the foundational element of language learning.

Firdausah (2020) states that one strategy to facilitate language teaching is pairwork. Working in pairs can make language learning processes more efficient, easier to implement, and easier to understand. However, researchers have found that low English language competence among students is a crucial issue that requires attention. Based on questionnaires and interviews with English teachers, researchers discovered that the implementation of group learning was less effective. This was primarily due to gender differences, where some female students did not want to be paired or grouped with male students, and vice versa. In addition, teachers struggled to ensure that all group members participated, and organizing students into groups or pairs often consumed much of the class time.

Harmer (2015) states that pair work and group work allow learners to work and maximize their own learning and ideas to produce meaningful spoken output, enabling effective learning. In this study, Collaborative Learning is recognized as a teaching method that reduces learners' anxiety, facilitates effective language acquisition, and improves students' speaking abilities.

Group work is often used as an excellent technique in language learning. Group work can be defined as the gathering of several students working on a single task. A group is defined when two or more people identify themselves as part of a group and acknowledge each other's presence. As students begin to learn, they develop the ability to respond to specific learning situations and regulate their learning properly. Group work helps them achieve good results.

Cooperative learning is an educational approach where students work together in small groups at various levels to achieve common goals. Cooperative learning involves students collaborating in small groups to maximize their learning and that of others.

a) Positive interdependence: Each group member needs the others' help to achieve common goals (although this does not mean individuals cannot achieve many goals on their own). As a result, everyone wins and no one loses.

b) Individual accountability: Each cooperative group member is responsible for part of the task, even if small. Thus, everyone contributes in some way.

c) Face-to-face interaction: Mutual support is required to complete tasks successfully because without support, cooperation cannot happen. According to Pujolàs, instilling confidence

through motivation, goals, feedback, and practice is essential.

d) Group processing: It is important for the group to evaluate how they work so they can improve. Information needed to complete tasks should be processed in a way accepted and useful for all members in their individual learning.

e) Interpersonal skills: Students must learn positive relationship skills such as listening, resolving conflicts through dialogue, motivating, criticizing ideas rather than individuals, taking turns, sharing materials and space, recognizing others' achievements, and maintaining one's viewpoint without harming others.

In structuring cooperative groups, students form small groups and receive instructions from the teacher before starting assigned tasks. Each member takes responsibility. Group members contribute to completing tasks and achieving common goals through mutual help, interaction, and communication. Group performance depends on members and their roles. Cooperative groups can be homogeneous or heterogeneous depending on members' levels and gender.

Homogeneous groups are organized based on students' abilities or weaknesses in specific subjects. Conversely, heterogeneous groups bring students of diverse abilities together to collaborate, help, and motivate each other to achieve individual and group goals. The effectiveness of grouping varies depending on how groups work. Some teachers believe homogeneous groups yield better success, while others find heterogeneous groups perform better. Teachers choose either based on student performance, interest, and activity type. All members must assume roles and understand them so everyone participates and is responsible.

Pair learning provides opportunities for students to speak and practice English in a more intimate and less stressful setting than working individually in front of the class. Group learning allows students to share ideas, discuss, and complete tasks together, increasing motivation and a sense of shared responsibility.

Both methods support the development of social skills like communication, cooperation, tolerance, and conflict resolution useful in daily life and further learning. However, teachers must manage these methods well to ensure every student participates actively and minimize obstacles like gender differences or group dominance.

The study at SD Negeri 060878 revealed that the implementation of group learning has not been running effectively. Based on direct interviews with the English teacher at the school, three main interrelated problems were found that affect the quality of group learning.

Problems Found:

a) Gender differences that hinder group formation.

b) Difficulty in ensuring active participation of every group member.

c) Relatively long time required for group management

a. Gender Differences Hindering Group Formation

The first and most dominant problem is gender differences, which cause female students to tend not to group with male students, and vice versa. This phenomenon negatively impacts the formation of inclusive groups because students feel more comfortable being in gender-homogeneous groups. Consequently, cross-gender social interaction becomes very limited, inhibiting the development of communication and collaboration skills that are essential in group learning. The English teacher expressed, "Female and male students feel more comfortable grouping with peers of the same gender, so cross-gender interaction is minimal and collaboration is less than optimal."

This factor is also influenced by social-cultural patterns and the psychosocial characteristics of elementary-aged children, who view same-gender peer groups as their comfort zone. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers actively apply strategies for forming inclusive and gender-balanced groups. Character education that reinforces values of cooperation and cross-gender tolerance is crucial. Additionally, ice-breaking activities and group games designed to strengthen relationships among students of different genders can help break these social barriers. Thus, study groups are expected to become more dynamic, harmonious, and productive, making the learning process more meaningful and effective.

b. Difficulty Ensuring Active Participation of Every Group Member

The second problem faced by the teacher is the challenge of ensuring every group member participates actively. Observations show that some students tend to dominate verbally and express opinions, while others appear passive and only follow along without significant contribution. This imbalance leads to poor quality discussions and suboptimal group work results, as well as unfair distribution of workload among members. The English teacher at SD Negeri 060878 acknowledged the difficulty of monitoring the participation of all students given the number of students and class dynamics.

To address this issue, teachers are advised to use more structured participation observation instruments, such as recording student activity during discussions. Clear task division and role allocation—such as leader, note-taker, presenter, and timekeeper—can enhance individual responsibility and engagement. Moreover, teachers should provide regular feedback and adopt transparent participation evaluation systems to motivate students to contribute actively. These are vital supports for the success of group learning comprehensively.

c. Relatively Long Time Required for Group Management

The third problem is the relatively long time needed to arrange and organize groups. Teachers at SD Negeri 060878 often face challenges in dividing students into groups that are fair and balanced in terms of gender and ability, which generally takes about 15-20 minutes. This time reduces the core teaching duration and can decrease student focus and motivation.

To overcome this, teachers are advised to make open plans by preparing permanent groups or using rotation patterns set before the lesson starts. Using time management tools like timers is a practical strategy to limit group arrangement duration. Furthermore, utilizing technology such as online class management applications and digital platforms can speed up and simplify the group formation process. Teachers can also integrate Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approaches that give students space to manage their group learning time and activities independently but in a structured manner.

4. CONCLUSION

Research at SD Negeri 060878 shows that the implementation of group learning in English learning is ineffective due to several issues. These issues include gender differences that hinder group formation, difficulties in ensuring the participation of each group member, and the time required for group management. This results in suboptimal group learning and a significant decline in students' English skills.

To address these issues, appropriate strategies are needed. Implementing inclusive and gender-balanced group formation, using structured participatory observation instruments, assigning clear tasks and roles to each group member, using technology to expedite the group formation process,

and implementing a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach to increase student participation can be effective solutions. Thus, group learning can be more effective and improve students' English skills...

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